

CHICAGO: READY TO LEARN!

Frequently Asked Questions

Below, please find a list of frequently asked questions about the Chicago: Ready to Learn! application process. Answers to the questions below apply to applications submitted to Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) for Head Start and Early Head Start funding AND to Chicago Public Schools (CPS) for Preschool for All and Prevention Initiative funding, unless otherwise noted.

Please note: These questions **DO NOT** apply to the *CPS School Application for Principals*.

1. Can I apply for both Pre-School for All/Prevention Initiative and Head Start/Early Head Start funding in one application?

No. While applicants should use the same application package and forms for all four funding streams, they must submit separate applications (both printed and emailed) for Head Start and Early Head Start (to DFSS) and Pre-School for All and Prevention Initiative (to CPS). While answers to some of the questions may be the same, you may choose to tailor your answers to questions based on the requirements of the funding streams to which you are applying.

2. What type of Program Models may I offer?

DFSS: For Head Start and Early Head Start, delegates may offer one of more of the several program models outlined in the Head Start Performance Standards (available at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>). Head Start models include full and half day center-based, licensed family child care, and home-based options. Early Head Start includes full day center-based, licensed family child care, and home-based options. In addition, DFSS supports innovative program models that are locally designed by the delegate. Whichever program models a delegate provides, it must be able to demonstrate that the model meets the needs of the population it serves.

CPS: Preschool for All funding is available for center-based or school-based models only. Prevention Initiative funding is available for both center-based or home visiting models. Details of the minimum requirements of permitted program models can be found at www.isbe.net/earlychi. Supplemental elements of programming may be detailed as “add-ons” on page 9 of the application. In addition, CPS supports innovative program models that are locally designed by the applicant. Whichever program models an applicant chooses to apply for, the application must be able to demonstrate that the model meets the needs of the population they intend to serve.

3. Do I have to have everything in place in order to apply?

Awardees must be ready to provide services at the time of contracting.

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4. How many slots can I ask for?

Applicants can request as many slots as they can justify given the documented need of the community they intent to serve and their operational capacity.

5. How will the RFP affect my IDHS Child Care funding?

It will not.

6. Can I apply to be a Partner Program?

DFSS: DFSS is not accepting Head Start Partner Program applications.

CPS: CPS does not accept Program Partnerships for service funding. Each agency must apply individually to be eligible for funding to provide Preschool for All or Prevention Initiative funding.

7. What program/contract year is this RFP for?

DFSS: Delegates awarded funding through this RFP will be expected to begin providing services for program year 13-14, fiscal year 2014. For Head Start, the program year begins on September 1 (approximately) and runs 128 to 248 days, depending on the program model (please refer to the Head Start and Early Head Start Program Options Table in the Head Start RFP Instructions). Full year programs usually end August 31. The contract year coincides with the fiscal year, Dec 1 – Nov 30. For the first contract year, DFSS will offer a 16 month contract; thereafter, contracts will be annually renewed.

CPS: This RFP is for the 2013-14 school year. If you currently hold a contract with CPS, your contract will be valid through the current contract period. However, you must reapply if you would like to be eligible to continue services beyond this year. CPS anticipates executing contracts prior to June 30, 2013.

8. Is this application for full year or part year programming?

DFSS: For Head Start and Early Head Start, the length of the program year depends on the program option and the needs of the community (please refer to the Head Start and Early Head Start Program Options Table in the Head Start RFP Instructions).

CPS: We encourage you to submit an application for the program that best meets the needs of your students, HOWEVER funding of services beyond the traditional model (2.5hours/day, 10months/year) will be based on community need, budget capacity, and quality of the proposals.

9. Can I apply for full year Pre School for all?

CPS: We encourage you to submit an application for the program that best meets the needs of your students, HOWEVER funding of services beyond the traditional model (2.5hours/day, 10months/year) will be based on community need, budget capacity, and quality of the proposals.

10. Where does the data used in the Chicago Community Needs Summary Tool collected from?

The data comes from various sources, and it is broken down into census tract units. If you scroll over a specific data element, a pop-up window will appear that will give you more information about that specific data point, including the source and year.

11. Is the data from the Chicago Needs Summary Tool only from Chicago or does it include the suburbs?

It does not include the suburbs. If you highlight a geographic region that includes areas outside the city of Chicago, that information will be automatically filtered out of the data you receive.

12. When I enter addresses into the Chicago Needs Summary Tool, if the bubbles overlap, will there be duplication in the data?

Duplicate data is automatically filtered out of any overlapping geographic areas. The column entitled "Your Combined Areas" will be an aggregation of all your areas, accounting for the duplicate areas.

13. Is there a funding estimate for these programs? If so, is it a final amount?

Estimates for funding per child are located in the Overview section of the RFP, available on line on the Mayor's Webpage. Please use this amount as a basis for building the program that best meets the needs of the community you intend to serve. Final funding will be determined at the time of contract execution.

14. What happens if the funding I applied for is too high to be sustainable?

***DFSS:** Head Start funding is based on a cost per child. Delegates only receive funding for the number of children who enroll and are in regular attendance.*

***CPS:** Funding is based on per-child allocations. Final funding will be determined at the time of contract execution.*

15. Will I be able to modify my program once my application has been approved?

Some aspects of the program may be negotiable; others are not. Please write an application that you intend to implement to best meet the needs of the community you intend to serve.

We will make decisions based on the quality of the application that you submit. Any modifications to the scope of the application will be discussed before contracting.

16. Theoretically, can cost-per-child be different from agency to agency?

Theoretically, cost-per-child can vary across agencies, but it is the intention of both DFSS and CPS to standardize cost-per-child as much as possible.

17. Why do I need a certificate of liability insurance to apply for Head Start?

***DFSS:** DFSS (the City of Chicago) cannot contract with any provider of services that does not have up-to-date liability insurances.*

18. Do I have to complete an application per site?

*No. Applicants should complete an application for each funding stream (Head Start, Early Head Start, Preschool for All, and Prevention Initiative) they wish to apply for. If the program being proposed will transpire at more than one site, applicants need to fill out the **Site Level Community and Program Information Sheet (pages 6-9)** for each site.*

19. Do I list staff according to funding stream? For instance, how would I list a teacher who's a Type 04 Certified Teacher paid by PFA teaching a HS classroom?

Place all relevant staff on pages 40-43 of the application. The Budget Forms allow an applicant to indicate the proposed funding allocation of the budget request and other sources of funding allocated to staff salaries.

20. How do I list enhancements to our program?

*There is an opportunity for the applicant to discuss enhancements or add-ons to the program on the **Site Level Community and Program Information Sheet** (page 9—quality add-ons)*

21. Can we use CPS salary structure when developing an application instead of community based organizations?

***CPS:** Applications should propose salaries that allow them to implement a quality program and fits within a reasonable budget for the agency.*

22. If I am currently a partner with a Head Start delegate agency, can I still apply?

***DFSS:** Yes.*

23. Are the teacher qualifications the same for Head Start and PFA?

No. Please refer to the Teacher Qualifications standards for each program.

24. How will my proposal be evaluated?

*Applications will be reviewed according to the **Proposal Review Rubrics** available online on the Mayor's webpage. There will be an external and internal review process.*

25. What is a professional development plan and who do I have to do them for?

***DFSS:** Head Start's professional development plan requirements and examples are available at the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>.*

***CPS:** Applicants should propose a plan for staff professional development that allows them to implement the highest quality program possible. This will vary across agencies. If there are any elements that applicants assume the funder will either provide or dictate, they should be made explicit in the application response.*

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Application FAQ's

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26. How many funding streams can I apply for?

There is no limit on the number of funding streams applicants may apply for through this application (1, 2, 3, or 4). CPS and DFSS will have independent review processes. Approval from one agency does not guarantee approval from the other agency. CPS and DFSS will communicate around resource allocation decisions.

27. Can I write my answers on the form itself?

The forms consist of editable textboxes which can be completed and saved as a pdf to be worked on over time.

28. How many pages is the application?

The Application Package, available online, is 69 pages.

The length of the application an organization submits will depend on a number of factors, including: which funding stream it is applying for; the type(s) of program models it is applying for; the number of sites it serves; and whether it provides a center-based model. Not all forms are required for all funding streams or program models.

*Additionally, if the organization provides services at more than one site, it must submit the **Site Level Community and Program Information Sheet (pages 6-9)** for each site.*

The length of the appendix may vary, as well, in the case that some documents are more than one page.

29. When is the application due?

All community-based applications are due October 1, 2012 by 4:30 pm.

NOTE FOR CPS: *School-based applications (for CPS Principals with CTU employees in their schools) are due November 2. Additional information is available for these applications at www.cityofchicago.org/bids/readytolearn*

30. When will announcements be made?

Programs will be notified about their application in the Spring.

31. If a Charter School is awarded funds, will they be able to perform their lottery for the Pre-K program?

CPS: *A Charter school with a Charter beginning in Kindergarten would have to abide by the terms of that charter and the lottery required at Kindergarten entry. Being awarded Preschool For All funding would not change the Charter.*

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32. Will it be public information regarding who applied and who got awarded?

Agencies contracted with for the 2013-14 school year will be indicated on the Early Childhood Webportal.

33. What kinds of documents are adequate to prove "sufficient cash reserves" to operate the program for the 3 months before reimbursement begins?

DFSS: Applicants may submit financial statements and/or balance sheets, statements from Certified Public Accountants or Licensed Public Accountants, audit statements, or other documents indicative of the fiscal health of the organization.

34. If an applying organization does not have an A-133, what alternatives would be suitable to submit?

Applicants that do not have Single Audits conducted for the past three years should submit their three most recent fiscal years' financial statements adhering to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) as well as the last three years of audit reports or statements from Certified Public Accountants or Licensed Public Accountants.

35. What constitutes proof of approval by the Board of Directors?

Any written document either signed by the Board of Directors or documenting a Board of Directors vote can be included to indicate the Board of Director's approval of the application. This should be in accordance to the agency's policies.

36. Are there start-up funds available?

No.

37. Will this funding will be available for us to apply for next cycle as well?

DFSS: This is the only time DFSS anticipates releasing a request for Head Start/ Early Head Start delegate agencies. Once an organization has delegate agency status, they qualify for renewal funding every year, conditional on program performance and federal funding. Slot allocations can vary from year to year, depending on the capacity of a delegate and the availability of slots. The special legal relationship that obtains between a Head Start grantee and a delegate agency is referred to in the Head Start/ Early Head Start RFP Instructions, which refers the reader to the federal regulations that govern this relationship and the rights and responsibilities of each entity.

CPS: CPS will have a monitoring process that will be based on the quality of each funded program. Opportunities for new applications after the 2013-14 school year will be made available intermittently, contingent on funds available.